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Focus on Detroit

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Since 1970 Detroit has been transformed from a city that was predominantly white to one that is predominantly black. Whites fled to the suburbs and to other places, and blacks arrived, primarily from the South. This migration pattern was the continuation of a long-term trend that finally produced the racial shift during the 1970s.

The job base also shifted. In fact, Detroit lost jobs at a faster rate than it lost people. This means that although black Detroiters, particularly women, have advanced in the occupational hierarchy, the proportion of workers that are unable to find good jobs has grown. As a result, black poverty has increased sharply, and black income distribution in Detroit is considerably less egalitarian that it has been traditionally.

MIGRATION

During April 1980 the Bureau of the Census asked each household to respond to a short questionnaire requesting age, gender, race, and whether of Spanish origin. More detailed information was solicited from a sample of households. In sparsely populated areas half of the households were included in the sample. In densely populated areas like Detroit and its suburbs, the samping ratio was one in six.

Among the questions on the detailed questionnaire was one pertaining to the residence of each household member five years previously or 1975. The tabulations show that of 2.5 million white people living in the Detroit suburbs located in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties in 1980, 138,000 were Detroit residents in 1975. In comparison 35,000 white people living in Detroit in 1980 lived in the suburbs five years earlier. In other words, net migration for this white cohort was greater than 100,000 in favor of the suburbs. Net migration between these areas and the rest of the world cannot be calculated, since it is not known how many Detroiters and suburbanites left the area. Since it is known that the number of whites living in Detroit dropped by over 400,000 between 1970 and 1980, white migration out of the city and its suburbs between 1975 and 1980 must have been approximately 150,000. Black migration from Detroit to suburbs amounted to 19,000, compared with a reverse migration of 14,000, or a net loss of 5,000 black Detroiters to the suburbs. Meanwhile, 32,000 blacks from the rest of the country arrived in Detroit with few leaving the city for other environs.

There was a natural increase due to births exceeding deaths. It was far less than net out-migration, however. As a result, between 1970 and 1980 Detroit's population declined by more than 20 percent from 1.5 million to 1.2 million. The number of white residents dropped by better than half (838,877 to 413,730), whereas the black population increased by 15 percent (660,428 to 758,939). Persons of races other than black and white increased in number from 12,177 in 1970 to 30,670 in 1980, or 152 percent. These figures may be contrasted with those for the area in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties outside of Detroit where the white population increased by 5.7 percent, black, 32.3 percent, and other races, 369.5 percent. In Detroit the black proportion of the population went from 43.7 percent in 1970 to 63.1 percent in 1980. In the suburbs blacks comprised 3.6 percent in the earlier period and 4.5 percent in the later (see Table 1).

It is interesting to note that the tide of migration of both blacks and whites to Detroit and its suburbs diminished substantially between the two censuses of 1970 and 1980. In 1970, 17 percent of Detroit's blacks had lived outside the three-county area five years previously compared with 4.7 percent in 1980. Among black suburbanites the figure declined from 16.3 percent for 1970 to 7.9 percent for 1980. Among whites the proportions living elsewhere five years earlier were 9.6 percent and 4.5 percent for Detroiters and 11.3 percent and 6.4 percent for suburbanites respectively in 1970 and 1980.

In Detroit the white population decline was relatively greater among men and women aged 40 to 50, a reflection of migration as well as the low birth rates of the 1930s. Next in severity of decline was the group under 20 years of age. The rate of decline was least among whites 70 years old and older. In the suburbs also, there was a decline in the 40 to 50 age group and in the 9 to 14 age group. There were increases in every other age category, particularly the elderly.

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Table 1

Residence Five Years Earlier of Persons 5 Years Old and Older, Living in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties: Census 1970 and 1980

	Detroit				Rest of Area			
	Black		White		Black		White	
	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980	1970	1980
Same house	265,426	397,437	488,705	259,272	44,460	61,776	1,348,358	1,466,291
Different house								
In Detroit	205,512	246,431	166,787	76,393	9,215	19,109	192,873	138,353
In rest of area	15,501	13,756	44,106	34,987	17,775	24,644	524,759	710,603
In rest of U.S.	100,189	32,223	76,165	17,980	13,965	9,090	266,004	159,836
Abroad	2,051	1,581	14,547	7,427	507	692	24,916	20,069
Total	588,679	691,428	790,310	396,059	85,926	115,311	2,356,910	2,495,152

SOURCE: Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population and Housing, Census Tracts, Detroit, Michigan (Washington, D.C.: 1983), PHC80-2-140, Tables P-12 and P-13, and a similar document for 1970.

Among blacks there were population gains in each category except those aged 40 to 50 and under age 5 in the city, and in every age category in the suburbs. In Detroit blacks outnumbered whites in every age grouping except 60 years old and older in 1980. In the suburbs whites were considerably more plentiful in every age category.

Among Detroit blacks 5.9 percent were 65 years old or older in 1970. The 1980 figure was 7.5 percent. Among Detroit whites the percentages were substantially greater: 15.9 percent in 1970 and 19.6 percent in 1980. No doubt these figures represent a combination of greater longevity among whites and selective migration, that is, the whites in the more economically productive age groups have left the city for jobs in the suburbs.

The figures reveal the opposite contrast at the other end of the age spectrum. Among blacks 43.8 percent were younger than 20 in 1970, compared with 30.0 percent among whites. The 1980 figures were 39.2 percent black and 23.2 percent white. This contrast is evidence of a greater proportion of white families with children leaving the city. The net result is a somewhat higher proportion of whites in the economically most productive age group, 20 to 64. In 1970 the proportion of whites in this category was 54.1 percent, and in 1980 it was 57.2 percent, compared with 50.3 percent and 53.3 percent respectively for blacks.

For the suburbs, the figures are as follows:

	1970	1980
Percent 65 or older		
Black	5.4	6.4
White	6.3	8.9
Percent under 20		
Black	46.8	39.9
White	41.4	31.8
Percent 20 to 64		
Black	47.8	53.7
White	52.3	59.3

Among both blacks and whites, the percentage in the age group 20 to 64 was greater in Detroit than in the suburbs in 1970. In 1980 the reverse was true.

The well-known shorter life expectancy of men compared with women is especially pronounced among blacks. The discrepancy is growing. In Detroit in 1970 there were 109 black women for every 100 black men. The 1980 figure was 113. Among whites the figures were 109 in both years. In the suburbs the figures were 107 and 110 among blacks in 1970 and 1980 and 103 and 105 among whites.

Among those 65 years of age or older, the life expectancy discrepancy is greater among whites. Among these elderly people, the ratio of white women to white men in Detroit was 131 to 100 in 1970 and 152 to 100 in 1980. Among blacks th figures were 118 to 100 in 1970 and 135 to 100 in 1980. Nearly the same ratios held in the suburbs.

Educational attainment improved for both racial and gender categories in Detroit and its suburbs. These data, compiled for people 25 years old and older, reveal that the proportion of black men in Detroit with eight years or less of schooling declined from 38 percent to 24 percent. The decline was even greater in the suburbs: 40 percent to 20 percent. The proportion of those with at least four years of college increased from 3.6 percent to 6.4 percent in Detroit and from 2.9 percent to 11.6 percent in the suburbs. Among blacks, the proportion of women with four or more years of college was somewhat greater than that among men in Detroit in both 1970 and 1980 and in the suburbs in 1980 only. White educational attainment was greater than black for both sexes, not only in Detroit but also in its suburbs. But among whites, a greater proportion of men than women have completed four or more years of college.

Among blacks the median value of owner-occupied housing in Detroit was $13,900 in 1980 compared with $16,500 for whites. In 1980 black owner-occupied housing was worth more than white: $21.300 compared with $20,400. In the suburbs the value of white owner-occupied housing went from $22,100 to $52,000, compared with an increase from $15,000 to $31,000 for blacks.

The proportion of housing that was owner occupied, as opposed to rental, was higher in Detroit than in the suburbs for both races in 1970, but the reverse was true in 1980. The home ownership rate was higher for whites than for blacks in Detroit and suburbs during both years.

	Owner-occupied housing (percent)	
	1970	1980
Detroit		
Black	51.1	52.7
White	66.0	65.7
Suburbs		
Black	62.0	51.1
White	81.3	61.3

Hard facts on Detroit area migration patterns since 1980 are not available. Evidence from a small, random sampling of households in the area suggests that the white population of Detroit has continued to decline and that the black population of this city also has declined since 1980. The black population of the suburbs has continued to increase, and the white suburban population has stabilized. These figures were prepared by the Bureau of Labor Statistics as part of their annual *Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment,* discussed later in this article. Further support for the notion of continued population drain from the city is provided in annual county and state population estimates prepared by the Department of Management and Budget in Lansing. These figures indicate substantial net out-migration from Wayne County and appreciable net out-migration from Macomb and Oakland counties as well between 1980 and 1983. According to state demographer Ching Li Wang, "The decline in Michigan's population in 1983 reflects the serious economic recession of the last three years. However, the decline does not mean a tremendous increase in the number of people moving out of the state. It is the result of a large reduction in the number of people moving in and some increase in the number of people moving out."[1] In the postwar period Michigan has usually been a exporter of well-educated young people. Due to the structure of our economy, there are insufficient job opportunities for graduates of Michigan colleges. We usually have been an importer of the less well-educated, who have sought low-skill, high-wage jobs in our factories.

DETROIT'S JOB BASE

In 1963 there were 3,370 manufacturing establishments located in Detroit compared with 3,653 in the rest of the three-county area. By 1972 the Detroit figure had declined to 2,398, whereas the suburbs had experienced an increase to 4,728. The trend continued through 1977 when Detroit had 1,954 such establishments compared with 5,551 in the suburbs.

The corresponding employment data are:

	Detroit	Suburbs
1963	200,600	293,300
1972	180,400	359,000
1977	153,300	395,200

When the 1982 data are available from the Census of Manufacturing, they are likely to show that the number of manufacturing jobs in Detroit has shrunk to less than 100,000, with a substantial decline in that statistic for the suburbs. Chrysler alone reduced the size of its Detroit area work force by approximately 50,000, closing its assembly plant in Hamtramck and one of its assembly plants in Detroit along with components plants in the city and its suburbs.

This, along with the generally depressed automotive economy, triggered other plant closings and layoffs. In the restructuring that is taking place in the automotive industry, Detroit has paid a heavy penalty for being the pioneering city in automotive mass production, therefore having the most antiquated, least efficient production facilities in the industry. Manufacturing activity in Detroit has been shifting to the suburbs and to other areas for the better part of the last two decades. The pace of the shift increased after 1977.

With its basic industry declining, Detroit has become a less attractive place for other kinds of business. The number of retail establishments was halved between 1963 and 1977; retail employment fell to less than 50,000 from a level of 72,000 between 1963 and 1977, and those declines no doubt continue. The announcements of grocery and department store closings each year are numerous, while news of new openings is sparse. Meanwhile, in the suburbs employment in retail trade more than doubled, from a level of 93,000 to 193,000 between 1963 and 1977.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Tables 2 and 3 have been prepared to show labor-force trends in the city of Detroit and the remainder of the six-county Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). Table 2 shows that Detroit's total labor force

Table 2
Labor Force Participation Rate for Persons Living in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties: Census 1970 and 1980

	Detroit, City		Rest of Area	
	1970	1980	1970	1980
Number of Persons 16 Years Old and Older				
Black males	197,062	234,312	28,262	40,403
females	225,351	284,096	31,704	46,714
Nonblack males	304,587	171,438	823,788	985,764
females	344,717	190,563	881,150	1,064,559
Total males	501,649	405,750	852,050	1,026,167
females	570,068	474,659	912,854	1,111,273
Total	1,071,717	880,409	1,764,904	2,137,440
Total Labor Force				
Black males	147,024	152,156	19,768	27,535
females	102,949	138,887	14,521	25,379
Nonblack males	220,915	114,466	688,392	806,269
females	134,646	78,694	341,515	531,479
Total males	367,939	266,622	708,160	833,804
females	237,595	217,581	356,036	556,858
Total	605,534	484,203	1,064,196	1,390,662
Labor Force Participation Rate (%)				
Black males	74.6	64.9	70.0	68.2
females	45.7	48.9	45.8	54.3
Nonblack males	72.5	66.8	83.4	81.8
females	39.1	41.3	38.8	49.9
Total males	73.4	65.7	83.1	81.2
females	41.7	45.8	39.0	50.1
Total	56.5	55.0	60.3	65.1

SOURCE: Bureau of the Census, 1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan (Washington, D.C.: 1983), PC80-1-C24, Tables 120, 134, 176, and 184, and a similar document for 1970.

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Michigan Economic Indicators

Item	Year previous of latest month	Previous month	Latest month
Manufacturing workers:			
Average weekly hours, Michigan	42.1	43.4	42.2 (July)
Average weekly hours, U.S.	40.0	40.8	40.4 (July)
Average hourly earnings, Michigan ($)	11.64	12.24	12.25 (July)
Average hourly earnings, U.S. ($)	8.84	9.14	9.17 (Aug.)
U.S. motor vehicle production (units)	706,556	740,970	826,937 (Aug.)
Electricity usage (mil. kwh.):			
Michigan	5,400	6,044	5,723 (Apr.)
United States	163,807	185,563	174,927 (Apr.)
Raw steel production:			
Michigan (000 net tons)	620	658	654 (July)
United States (000 net tons)	6,921	7,945	7,460 (July)
Consumer price index (1967 = 100)			
Detroit area	298.4	306.3	307.7 (July)
United States	299.3	310.7	311.7 (July)
U.S. producer price index (1967 = 100)	303.2	311.4	312.0 (July)
Michigan farm prices received index (1977 = 100)	123	140	138 (July)

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Michigan Crop Reporting Service; Ward's Automotive Reports; American Iron and Steel Institute; and Energy Information Administration.

Permit Authorized Construction in Selected Counties, First Six Months 1983-1984

(Thousands of dollars)

County	Residential		Industrial		Office		Mercantile	
	1983	1984	1983	1984	1983	1984	1983	1984
Allegan	2,617	4,274	41	96	0	0	0	61
Antrim	3,408	4,637	0	0	0	0	0	0
Berrien	2,662	3,629	36	535	0	802	77	357
Clinton	3,239	6,274	0	0	0	0	175	357
Emmet	2,309	2,747	0	0	0	0	0	68
Genesee	11,326	13,445	920	1,885	3,180	2,029	1,731	9,128
Grand Traverse	9,179	9,974	32	1,166	664	428	390	932
Ingham	14,280	19,743	340	547	340	7,552	1,257	2,684
Jackson	2,380	3,865	0	60	0	7	63	285
Kalamazoo	9,536	14,773	2,794	1,235	735	1,129	616	654
Kent	42,362	54,284	4,129	10,340	1,589	2,752	1,999	7,814
Livingston	7,266	10,186	0	3,510	250	140	1,140	398
Macomb	41,178	61,299	3,572	7,273	2,247	2,731	6,085	7,470
Midland	7,207	10,244	405	208	205	3,329	56	0
Muskegon	3,712	5,764	200	514	373	426	555	1,399
Oakland	108,569	163,228	5,246	52,720	52,580	71,600	5,551	11,657
Ottawa	18,224	21,529	1,106	10,941	315	1,019	4,923	3,182
Saginaw	2,819	3,532	180	351	651	571	924	357
St. Clair	5,786	5,235	91	568	1,488	569	97	222
Washtenaw	12,673	21,121	6,720	6,380	9,278	4,419	1,464	328
Wayne	48,179	73,277	20,201	85,392	2,673	7,828	8,004	12,352
Michigan	452,525	623,169	57,192	192,211	81,906	111,982	47,195	70,588

SOURCE: Bureau of the Census, special release.

Table 3
Labor Force Participation Rate for Persons Living in the Detroit SMSA: 1981, 1982, and 1983

	Detroit, City			Detroit SMSA		
	1981	1982	1983	1981	1982	1983
Civilian Noninstitutional Population, 16 Years Old and Older (000)						
Black males	219	230	207	28	34	49
females	278	262	250	39	46	64
White males	157	149	139	1,067	1,073	1,066
females	162	170	154	1,186	1,154	1,162
Total males	384	387	354	1,107	1,120	1,131
females	447	439	413	1,244	1,215	1,241
Total	831	826	767	2,351	2,335	2,373
Civilian Labor Force (000)						
Black males	143	154	134	22	22	34
females	128	124	118	20	23	37
White males	108	100	89	883	865	846
females	72	81	69	606	608	628
Total males	258	260	229	915	899	891
females	202	206	191	637	640	673
Total	460	466	419	1,551	1,538	1,565
Labor Force Participation Rate (%)						
Black males	65.5	66.8	64.8	79	65	69
females	46.0	47.2	47.1	51	50	58
White males	68.9	66.9	64.0	83	81	79
females	44.6	47.4	44.8	51	53	54
Total males	67.1	67.2	64.6	83	80	79
females	45.3	47.0	46.2	51	53	54
Total	55.4	56.4	54.7	66	66	66

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, **Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment** (Washington, D.C.: annual), and special release.
NOTE: The Detroit Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area consists of Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair, and Wayne counties. Data shown are annual averages.

declined by 20 percent or over 120,000 between 1970 and 1980. This phenomenon occurred primarily as a result of population loss in the category 16 years old or older. There also was a decline in labor-force participation. Meanwhile, in the rest of the region population and labor-force participation gains produced a labor-force increase of 31 percent or over 325,000.

Detroit's loss occurred among the nonblack population. The black labor force actually increased by 16 percent. In the remainder of the region the black labor force rose by 54 percent during the decade, but it still remains a relatively small proportion of the total. In Detroit blacks comprised 60 percent of the labor force in the last Census of Population compared with 41 percent ten years earlier. In the rest of the region the black proportion of the labor force increased from 3.2 percent to 3.8 percent of the total during the decade.

The rate of labor force participation among black Detroit men fell from nearly 75 percent in 1970 to just under 65 perecnt in 1980, a precipitous drop compared with that for black men in the other areas of Southeast Michigan and for nonblacks in the city and suburbs. Labor force participation rates for black and nonblack women increased in both city and suburbs, particularly in the suburbs. Whereas among men, black labor force participation rates are generally below those for whites, the reverse is true among women. The evidence in Table 3 suggests that the Detroit trends have continued: declining population, declining labor-force participation rates, and declining labor force. The black population of the suburbs continues its rapid growth, while the white population appears to be stable. Both the black and white populations of Detroit are declining, with the phenomenon most pronounced among black women.

The reader is cautioned that Tables 2 and 3 are not strictly comparable for two reasons. First, the data collection procedures are at variance. Table 2 is from the Census of Population, conducted primarily by mail. Table 3 was developed from a small sample of households queried by professional survey takers. Second, the area designated as the SMSA in Table 2 is the sum of Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne counties. In Table 3 the rest of the SMSA includes Lapeer, Livingston, and St. Clair counties as well.

The number of Detroiters with civilian jobs declined by 166,000, or 30 percent, between 1970 and 1980 in the face of a 25 percent or 249,000 increase in the rest of the three-county area (Table 4). Among white male

Table 4
Employment and Unemployment, Persons 16 Years Old or Older, Living in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties: Census 1970 and 1980

	Detroit, City		Rest of Area	
	1970	1980	1970	1980
Civilian Employment				
Black male	132,361	111,601	17,249	21,247
female	91,548	113,681	13,181	21,411
Nonblack male	209,483	98,525	656,314	727,788
female	127,792	70,900	323,025	488,455
Total male	341,844	210,126	673,563	749,035
female	219,340	184,581	336,206	509,866
Total	561,184	394,707	1,009,769	1,258,901
Unemployment				
Black male	14,347	40,144	2,219	6,079
female	11,391	25,113	1,329	3,933
Nonblack male	10,935	16,453	29,170	75,412
female	6,818	7,786	18,366	42,863
Total male	25,282	56,597	31,389	81,941
female	18,209	32,899	19,695	46,796
Total	43,491	89,495	51,084	128,737
Unemployment Rate				
Black male	9.8	26.5	11.4	22.2
female	11.1	18.1	9.2	15.5
Nonblack male	5.0	14.3	4.3	9.4
female	5.1	9.9	5.4	8.1
Total male	6.9	21.2	4.4	9.9
female	7.7	15.1	5.5	8.4
Total	7.2	18.5	4.8	9.3

SOURCE: Bureau of the Census, **1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan** (Washington, D.C.: 1983), PC80-1-C24, Tables 120, 134, 176, and 184, and a similar document for 1970.

Detroiters employment fell by over half. Among white female Detroiters employment fell by 45 percent. Among black Detroiters the number of employed males declined by 16 percent, or over 20,000, whereas the number of employed females rose by 24 percent, or 22,000.

In reviewing these data on employment, one should bear in mind that they are based on surveys of people who live in Detroit or the suburbs. People who work in Detroit may live in the suburbs and vice versa. Consequently, the figures in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 do not represent the number of jobs located in the particular areas.

Those in the section above, dealing with Detroit's job base, do. The Census of Manufacturing and the Census of Retail Trade are based on responses from employers, not employees like those in the subsequent tables.

In 1970 unemployment rates for men and women overall were moderately higher in Detroit than in the suburbs. Among black men and white women the city rates were below those in the suburbs. By 1980 the suburban unemployment rate overall had doubled and that for Detroit had more than doubled with the result that the Detroit rate was double that of the rest of the three-county area (Table 4). Detroit rates were above the suburban rates in each of the four categories of men, women, black, and nonblack. In both the suburbs and the city, in both 1970 and 1980, black unemployment rates were above those for whites for both men and women.

Table 5
Employment and Unemployment, Persons 16 Years Old or Older, Living in the Detroit SMSA: 1981, 1982, and 1983

	Detroit, City			Detroit SMSA		
	1981	1982	1983	1981	1982	1983
Employment (000)						
Black males	106	98	93	16	15	24
females	97	86	83	14	16	24
White males	92	80	72	805	760	743
females	65	71	60	536	529	558
Total males	203	183	169	829	785	776
females	164	158	147	558	553	589
Total	367	341	316	1,387	1,338	1,365
Unemployment						
Black males	38	56	41	5	7	10
females	31	38	35	6	8	14
White males	16	20	16	78	105	103
females	8	10	9	69	79	70
Total males	55	77	60	86	114	115
females	39	48	44	78	87	84
Total	93	125	104	165	200	199
Unemployment Rate						
Black males	26.2	36.1	30.6	24	32	29
females	24.0	30.7	29.8	30	33	37
White males	14.5	19.7	18.4	9	12	12
females	10.7	12.0	12.8	11	13	11
Total males	21.3	29.8	26.1	9	13	13
females	19.1	23.3	23.2	12	14	12
Total	20.3	26.9	24.7	11	13	13

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Geographic Profile of Employment and Unemployment (Washington, D.C.: annual), and special release.
NOTE: The Detroit Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area consists of Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair, and Wayne counties. Data shown are annual averages.

Whereas many of the numbers in Table 5 are too small and the sampling error too large to be very reliable, the figures do suggest that the unemployment situation worsened among men and women, both black and white, in Detroit and the suburbs. This is not surprising, since 1982 was the worst economic slump since 1933. The data also suggest that there was some employment recovery in the suburbs in 1983 but not in Detroit. The improved unemployment picture for the city resulted from a decline in the size of the labor force.

OCCUPATIONS

The dwindling number of manufacturing establishments in this city is reflected in the declining number of people employed in the occupational category known as operative. This is the category which includes most of the high-wage, low-skill jobs that drew southerners to Detroit during the 1920s, 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Between 1970 and 1980 the number of Detroiters employed as operatives declined by over 40 percent. Whereas in 1970 over 30 percent of this city's employed black and white men and women were so classified, by 1980 that proportion had declined to less than 25 percent. Meanwhile, the number of suburbanites who worked as operatives increased somewhat, although the proportion of all employed suburbanites in this area declined from 21 percent to 17 percent. More recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics suggest that the number of operatives, and the proportion of the labor force so employed, has continued to decline in Detroit and is less in the suburbs too than it was in 1980. Blacks were especially heavily dependent on these jobs. In both Detroit and its suburbs over half of black males worked as operatives in 1970, compared with less than a third among white males. In 1980 about 40 percent of black men were operatives compared with about 25 percent for white males.

For blacks some employment opportunities materialized in the service workers category, other than domestics. This classification is heavily weighted by occupations such as nursing aide, cook, barber, and cleaning service occupations that pay poorly. There were sizeable increases in the number of suburbanites so employed. In one of the poorest paying occupational groupings, domestics, the number of employed is dwindling among women and men, black and white, in both the city and its suburbs.

The number and proportion of employed black men and women moving into the ranks of professional and managerial-type occupations is increasing, both in the city and its suburbs. This occupational category is heavily weighted in favor of the top-paying jobs. In Detroit in 1980 the proportion of black women employed in this category was about the same as the proportion of white women as well as men that fall in this classification (around 22 percent). In 1970 the proportion for black women was appreciably below that for white men and women. In both 1970 and 1980 the proportion of black men classified in the top category was well below the proportions for black women and white men and women, although there was some improvement between 1970 and 1980. In the suburbs the ranks of professionals and managers are heavily dominated by white males, although black males as well as women of both races made more rapid gains between 1970 and 1980.

Detroiters, particularly white males, are more heavily dependent than are suburbanites on local government as a source of jobs, and that dependence has grown. Among white women the proportion employed in local government is greater in the suburbs.

INCOME AND POVERTY

Among families queried in the 1970 Census of Population, median income among white families was about 27 percent above that of blacks. (The income data actually pertain to the year 1969.) The relative difference

was essentially the same ten years later. In the suburbs the disparity was roughly 50 percent in both years. What is striking in the data is a sharp deterioration in the equality of income distribution among black Detroit families. Evidence of this phenomenon is the fact that median income among these families grew appreciably less rapidly than mean income. The median family is in the middle of the income distribution scale when these incomes are arrayed high to low. The mean is above the median to the extent that high incomes among a few families raise the arithmetic average for the whole group. The ratios of mean to median incomes among families are:

Table 6
Distribution of Income for Black and White Families Living in Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Counties: Census 1970 and 1980

Income group	Detroit, City		Rest of Area	
	1970	1980	1970	1980
Number of Black Families				
Less than $5,000	39,664	30,472	5,221	3,738
$ 5,000–$ 9,999	50,376	33,455	7,031	4,461
$10,000–$14,999	36,795	24,059	5,055	3,546
$15,000–$24,999	20,877	41,998	2,858	7,333
$25,000–$49,999	2,722	44,304	395	9,273
Over $50,000	335	5,375	39	1,611
Total	150,769	179,663	20,599	29,962
Median income	$8,645	$15,403	$8,600	$19,400
Mean income	$9,368	$18,290	$9,400	$22,100
Number of White Families[1]				
Less than $5,000	34,692	7,848	50,059	21,359
$ 5,000–$ 9,999	60,386	15,898	127,366	47,039
$10,000–$14,999	66,200	15,497	216,378	60,213
$15,000–$24,999	49,498	30,142	198,376	176,459
$25,000–$49,999	9,611	32,407	49,110	331,352
Over $50,000	1,251	4,439	9,602	81,941
Total	221,638	106,231	650,891	718,363
Median income	$11,000	$19,478	$13,400	$29,000
Mean income	$12,150	$21,786	$14,000	$31,100

SOURCE: Bureau of the Census, **1980 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan** (Washington, D.C.: 1983), PC80-1-C24, Tables 130, 136, and 186, and a similar document for 1970.

1. Nonblack in 1970.

	Detroit		Suburbs	
	1970	1980	1970	1980
Black	1.08	1.19	1.09	1.14
White	1.11	1.12	1.04	1.07

Poverty data bear out the worsening income distribution among blacks. In the 1980 census 27 percent of black individuals lived in households below the poverty level, compared with 22 percent ten years earlier. Among whites in this city the percentage increased from 9 to 13. Among blacks in the suburbs the percentage was stable at 20. Among white people it increased from a level of 4 percent to 5 percent. Bear in mind that these figures are based on 1969 and 1979 incomes, both relatively prosperous years compared with those that followed. More recent compilations, based on a small sample of households, show a sharp increase in poverty in the city. In Lansing the Department of Social Services, which administers public assistance in this state, has data which show that, whereas there were 410,000 persons drawing public assistance in Wayne County in April 1980, by April 1983 the figure had reached 482,000. The poverty rate in Detroit must have exceeded one-third. The Wayne County caseload has declined since April 1983, standing at 466,000.

PROSPECTS

Except for 1982, when General Motors was granted a permit to start its Poletown plant, the level of permit activity for factories in Detroit has accounted for a small proportion of the Detroit SMSA (the sum of Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair and Wayne counties), ranging from 6.1 percent in 1977 to .1 percent in 1980. Last year Detroit accounted for a mere 1.7 percent of the total. Prospects this year and beyond are poor. This means that the suburbs and much of the rest of the state and nation are replacing worn out factories with modern ones, while Detroit's manufacturing capital continues to age. The manufacturing job base, which still provides perhaps as many as 75,000 relatively well-paying, low-skill jobs in this city, will inevitably shrink. Although the construction picture is not as gloomy for commercial activity, it seems unlikely that overall retail and services employment can expand much with the continued exodus of factory jobs, though there will be geographic shifts in such employment within the city. Continued population loss, both black and white, is inevitable in the foreseeable future.

Since World War II Detroit has been in transition from a city dominated by heavy manufacturing. The pace of that transition intensified after 1978, displacing multitudes of workers from high-paying jobs. The positive side of the picture, such as the economic strides made by employed black women and men, are obscured by the negative news. Within the context of a shrinking population and job base, these favorable trends also will continue. As the population dwindles through natural loss, the burdens that are legacies of the past will ease. Largely through attrition, Detroit is becoming a diversified city with a more balanced selection of job opportunities as well as cultural and recreational activities for those who will live here at the turn of the century. Economically, recessions will become less severe and recoveries will be less anemic.

Currently, an economic slowdown is taking place both nationally and in this state. This is reflected in declining employment since June in the nation and in a constant number of employed in Michigan during May, June, July, August, and September, at a level about 50,000 less than the March and April figure. Assuming that relationships of the past still hold, Detroit very likely will average fewer jobs in 1984 than it did in 1983.

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Ching-li Wang, *Population Change in Michigan Counties, 1980–1983* (Lansing: Office of Revenue and Tax Analysis, Department of Management and Budget, 1984), p. 11.

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